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ABSTRACT

This paper assesses the changes in positions of females over a 5-year period in academic administrative hierarchy, comparing changes between internal and external hirings, between public and private institutions, and identifying any emerging career pathways for women. Data were collected on higher education administrative positions listed in every other issue in the Gazette section of the 1986 and the 1991 "Chronicles of Higher Education." It was found that over the last 5 years, numbers of female appointments have increased, but the hiring institution has shifted from public in 1986 to private in 1991. Additionally, schools are now more likely to hire from within the system than they were in 1986. In both years, women predominated at the directorship level, a supportive staff position outside the policy-making academic hierarchy. The paper also reports that private colleges and universities have more flexible hierarchies, are more receptive to female candidates, and are more willing to consider competence over credentials. It is noted that as long as men dominate the administrative hierarchy, time-in-line traditions will dominate over more flexible promotion alternatives. Also, public institutions need to institute alternative career paths for women. Contains 31 references. (GLR)

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An Analysis of Higher Education Administrative Appointments: A Focus on Women from 1986 to 1991

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Eastern Educational Research Association, Hilton Head, South Carolina, March 1992

Running head: FOCUS ON WOMEN

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Abstract

The purposes of this paper are to assess the changes over a five year period in the administrative hierarchy comparing changes between internal and external hirings between public and private institutions, and identify any emerging career pathways for women. In order to accomplish this a content analysis of higher education administrative positions listed in every other issue of the Gazette section of the 1986 and the 1991 Chronicles of Higher of Education yielded a large sampling of positions ranging from president to assistant director and over 50 others in between.

Over the last five years, numbers of female appointments have increased but the hiring institution has shifted from public in 1986 to private in 1991. Schools are more likely to hire from within the system than they were in 1986. In both years women still predominate ath the directorship level, a supportive staff position outside the policy making academic hierarchy. Private colleges and universities have more flexible hierarchies, are more receptive to female candidates, and more willing to consider competence over credential.

As long as men dominate the administrative hierarchy, time-in-line traditions will dominate over more flexible promotion alternatives. Public institutions need to institute alternative career paths for women or find them concentrated in the public colleges and universities.

An Analysis of Higher Education Administrative Appointments: A Focus on Women from 1986 to 1991

Introduction

Historically, women have been relegated to the lower paying, lower ranking, entry level positions and are more likely than their male colleagues to be employed by small, private colleges having small-sized faculties, and small enrollments (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Barrax, 1985; Edson, 1988; Faulwell & Gordon, 1985; and Fox & Hesse-Biber, 1984). Ost and Twale (1989) found that women are heavily concentrated in the directorship and other lower ranking line and staff positions.

Over the past two decades, however, statistics have substantiated an increase in the numbers of women entering higher education administration. Women represented 8.5% of all higher education administrators in both 1975 (Grant & Lind, 1976) and 1980 (Grant & Eiden, 1981), while in 1990 they constituted 38% of the total higher education administrative staff (Snyder & Hoffman, 1991). Moore (1984) and Robbins and Kahn (1985) anticipate that an expansion in administration could add a concomitant number of new positions to the hierarchical structure indicating a need to maintain a pool of qualified candidates to fill these vacancies.

The purposes of this study of administrative appointments in higher education are to compare the data collected in 1986 with data collected in 1991 to (1) assess any changes over a five year period relative to the proportion of women's representation in

the administrative hierarchy; (2) to compare changes between internal and external hirings between public and private institutions; and (3) to identify any emerging career pathways for women in higher education administration.

Theoretical Background

Demographics

Women are still more likely to be associated with the nurturing fields such as counseling, nursing, library science, social work, and education. Women appear frequently in supportive staff positions rather than authoritarian line positions and are often clustered in pockets at the lower levels of the administrative hierarchy (Adelman, 1991; Bernard, 1964; Bernstein, 1984; Epstein, 1971; Etaugh, 1984). They often head special programs for women, minorities, or international populations, or oversee advising and resource centers (Kaplan & Tinsley, 1989).

Women administrators are concentrated in small colleges, liberal arts colleges, and women's colleges. Numbers of women in the private university administration are slightly higher than those in the public institutions (Moore, 1984; Snyder & Hoffman, 1991; Tinsley, 1985).

Barrax (1985) and Warner et al (1988) agree that the area in which one receives the degree is a significant predictor of mobility into senior level administrative positions. Physical science graduates are more likely to secure senior level academic positions. Degrees in education improve the likelihood of an

administrative post in a non-academic area. Since men are more likely to gravitate to the sciences and women to education, females decrease their chances of entry into senior level academic affairs positions.

Women's value system

Mickelson (1989) found that women place different values on work, career, workplace, and productivity than men. They establish themselves as outcasts in the male communications and promotion network. Women rely on themselves and their self-confidence whereas men depend upon external situational cues to direct their actions. Women depend upon the formal bureaucracy and hard work to advance themselves in the hierarchy whereas men utilize the informal bureaucracy to identify influential personnel to help them advance and succeed. Men are more likely to be fast tracked in the hierarchy, i.e., identified as superstars and promoted faster than the normative expectation (Kanter, 1977).

Women are more productive than their male colleagues but often go underrewarded for their extra efforts (Adelman, 1991). Because they are more productive but less upwardly mobile though the hierarchy, women render themselves less effective to the organization (Hennig & Jardim, 1979). In addition, women are less likely than men to be competitive. Kaufman and Richardson (1982) conclude that "women's occupational aspirations and life achievement are conditioned by accessibility and opportunity" (p. 91). Occupational polarization based on gender has been a stable

phenomenon in the workplace. Leaving women out of the inner circles of power and authority perpetuates the social homogeneity of Whyte's organization man (Kanter, 1977).

One self-imposed barrier faced by women aspiring to administrative positions comes when they do not envision themselves at the highest levels of administration until after they secure an entry level position. Oftentimes it is too late to achieve more than mid level management given that women earn their doctorates seven to ten years later than men in the same age group (Edson, 1988; Kanter, 1977; Ost & Twale, 1989; Warner et al, 1988).

Sponsorship and nomination increase the candidate's chances for promotion. In fact most of the top administrative positions are "closed to any candidates other than the person sponsored" (Sagaria & Johnsrud, 1987, p. 2). Kaplan and Helly (1984) report that search committees may be apprehensive and exclude females, fearful of their ability to survive in a male dominated career field. Warner et al. (1988) agree that academic appointments rely on nomination and recruitment as opposed to non-academic positions and men have a greater likelihood than women of being nominated. Barrax (1985) notes the importance of a good "recommendation from the right persons" (p. 29), a factor more often associated with male than female candidates.

Organizational and administrative structure

Another barrier affecting women's career mobility is the traditional, formal college and university bureaucratic

structure. It relies on career mobility up a hierarchical ladder through time-in-line experience, i.e., movement through fixed positions and the securing of successive appointments with increasing levels of responsibility, authority, and salary. This model characterizes the typical male career pathway, a factor which has accounted for much of the underrepresentation among women in senior levels of higher education administration.

The time-in-line model must be augmented to include alternative mechanisms to key administrative positions. Fortunately, the loosely-coupled nature of post-secondary administrative structures and the unique culture of each may accommodate this needed flexibility. Alternative pathways for women pursuing senior level administrative positions can benefit from this loose coupling in terms of the organization's sensitivity and adaptability to change, its ability to flourish in the face of ambiguity, and its decentralized, autonomous nature (Weick, 1976). The alternatives to this traditional time-in-line model take two forms.

Miner and Estler (1985) describe one alternative as the accrual mobility model: An incumbent, while executing the duties of a current position, accrues enough expertise and responsibility to exceed the written expectations of that job. This `evolved job' becomes rewritten and institutionalized with a concomitant change in perhaps job title and/or salary. In other words, a position and its respective duties are developed around the incumbent rather than the traditional pattern of defining the

position and then searching for an appropriate match. The institution fosters the development of qualified personnel through unplanned mechanisms since the new position unfolds as the incumbent accrues experience.

In the second approach, resources and internal flexibility are dependent upon administrative necessity. Here new staff positions within the traditional hierarchy are created to satisfy changing administrative needs and tasks: For example, these may include special or executive assistant-to type positions, and new assistant or associate vice president, provost, dean, or director slots. As the individual holding the position gains expertise, the position may be defined to accommodate the incumbent's abilities and duties. Although such changes perhaps require an external searching process, the internal candidate has an edge since career ladders at this level reward loyal campus insiders while senior level appointments often necessitate an off-campus hiring (Moore, 1984).

Methodology

A content analysis of higher education administrative positions listed in every other issue of the Gazette section of the 1986 and the 1991 Chronicles of Higher Education yielded a representative sample of 1610 positions in 1986 and 1472 positions in 1991. This information furnished listings of hiring trends in terms of old and new position descriptions among public and private colleges and universities who reported having filled administrative positions these two years. These positions

established an indicator of the rate at which men and women secured academic and non-academic administrative appointments in all nine Carnegie classifications of higher education institutions from the level of assistant director through the presidency.

Gender of successful candidates was determined on the basis of name. For the unisex names for which gender could not be distinguished, the listing was coded as male. Institutions were classified as either public or private. Position changes were then categorized in three ways: from within the same college or university; from within the same higher education system; or from outside the system as well as outside higher education. These were later collapsed to `within the same college or system' and `outside the system or higher education.'

To identify appointment patterns, the analysis of positions included a determination of frequencies and cross tabulations of positions. Chi-square was used to test the goodness-of-fit of the distribution for each of the positions studied ($p < .05$). In each year, over 55 categorized positions were collapsed to concentrate on just the president, vice president, associate and assistant vice president, dean, associate and assistant dean, department chair, director, associate and assistant director, and all others. Each position was treated as a subset drawn from the total sample. The results of each sample were compared for the two years under study.

The positions included in the content analysis were limited, however, to those printed in the Chronicle's Gazette section. Given that the publication is international in scope, however, the sample of positions analyzed represented a wide variety of academic and non-academic appointments, covering all possible levels of the administrative hierarchy, at all types of colleges and universities from across the country.

The data addressed three research questions: (1) Over the last five years have females been successful entering and ascending the higher education administrative hierarchy proportionate with their representation in higher education? (2) Have there been differences in success rates for women in the public versus private university hierarchies from either within or outside the hierarchy? and (3) Are there any emerging alternative career pathways amenable to women in the higher administration hierarchy?

Results

Several changes have been apparent over the last five years with regard to higher education administrative appointments. Number of female appointments reported to The Chronicle has risen from 26% in 1986 to 32% in 1991. The hiring institution was more likely to be public in 1986 (53%) and private in 1991 (57%). There was little change over the five years in the practice of hiring inside the system in 1986 (68%) or in 1991 (70%). Overall there were more positions reported at the president and vice-president levels in 1991 than in 1986.

While there appeared a trend toward same system hirings in 1986, i.e., private to private (69%) and public to public (69%), in 1991 public institutions tended to strengthen that policy (76%) and private college slightly relaxed it (64%). Furthermore, public institutions remained constant in their infrequent hiring of persons outside higher education while private schools went outside the domain of higher education more often than before and more often than the public institutions. In each year, public schools were more likely to search outside for male rather female candidates at all position levels.

Insert Table 1 here

Whereas public institutions overall were more likely to hire persons especially males in 1986 from outside the system for such positions as president, vice-president, dean, director, chair, and `All Other', the trend shifted in 1991 to predominantly same system hirings for president, vice-president, associate and assistant vice-president, dean, associate and assistant dean, director, and `All Other'. Private institutions in 1986 were more likely than public schools to go outside their system to hire a president, vice-president, associate and assistant vice-president, chair, deans, and directors. Five years later private schools were slightly more willing than public schools to go outside for every position except assistant and associate director.

Insert Table 2 here

In terms of positions, both public and private institutions saw a greater turnover at the CEO position. Public schools encountered a five year decline in the number of appointments at the associate and assistant vice-president, dean, and director levels, and the `All Other' positions. Private institutions witnessed an increase of vice-president and associate and assistant vice-president appointments over the five year period.

The five year span shows a change in the numbers of female appointments in public institutions from 17% in 1986 to 30% in 1991; for the private colleges and universities a change of 36% in 1986 to 33% in 1991. In absolute numbers of appointments, however, current public hiring trends lag behind the 1986 and 1991 private hiring trends. On the average for each year, 17% of all positions were being filled from outside higher education.

Insert Table 3 here

In 1986 female public university vice-presidents, associate and assistant vice-presidents, deans, associate and assistant deans, directors, associate and assistant directors, and `All Others' were likely to be chosen from outside their system; in 1991, the reverse became true of these positions. Private schools in 1986 tended to hire female presidents, vice-presidents, deans, directors, associate and assistant directors, and chairs from outside their system; by 1991 the reverse was true here also.

In 1986 associate and assistant levels of deans and vice-presidents and the `All Other' category at private schools were being filled by women from within the private system. Public institutions were following a similar trend for women. By 1991 public institutions were going outside the system of public education much less frequently to hire women. In 1986 women predominated at the directorship position (42%), the deanship (20%), and the vice-presidency (9%); in 1991 women were still more likely to hold the directorship (33%), the deanship (21%), and the `All Other' positions (16%).

Department chairs in 1986 were almost exclusively appointed from outside the hiring institution, but in 1991 public schools were more likely to hire within and private schools were still willing to look outside their system for qualified chair candidates.

The `All Other' category in each year included collapsed categories ranging from librarian to controller to registrar and the assistant-to-type positions. These hirings were likely to be either internal or external to the system in 1986, but in 1991, they shifted to appointments within the same system. Successful outside candidates in this category may have hailed from outside higher education, such as business, government, private practice, or consulting firms.

Discussion and Conclusion

Female representation

Over the five year span women in higher education

administration have increased in numbers but still appear underrepresented in the hierarchy relative to their presence in post secondary education in general. Both years analyses show that women still predominate at the directorship level, a supportive staff position outside the policy making academic hierarchy. This study lends credence to the notion of the `glass ceiling' apparent in hiring procedures. However, women continue to secure academic leadership positions at the dean's level. Their increase in the `All Other' category places them in predominantly staff positions as well. Supporting previous studies (Kaplan & Tinsley, 1989; Sagaria, 1988), women administrators are more likely to be found in student affairs, managerial positions, and auxiliary functions as opposed to the academic areas. Kaufman and Richardson's (1982) notion of "sex segregation of occupation and market location" still supporting "distinct opportunity structures for men and women" (p. 97) appears to hold true for this study as well.

Public versus private institutions

Nearly all hirings in the 1986 and 1991 studies were of a candidate from a similarly affiliated institution, i.e., public to public and private to private. Each study affirms that female administrators are underrepresented at public colleges and universities while continuing to have more success at private schools also illustrated by Etaugh (1984), Faulwell and Gordon (1985), Ost and Twale (1989), and Twale, 1992).

By tightening their policy to hire from within the system, public colleges and universities will inadvertently exclude women from the public school reinforcing credential over expertise and competence. This will also be reinforced by public schools not going outside to hire females but who will go outside to find qualified male candidates at all ten position levels. They seem to be willing to hire females from either type of institution only at the entry level, assistant director position. This fact indicates a greater likelihood of inflexibility from traditional time-in-line hiring practices. Only in 1986 does the rate of promotion of women to the vice-presidency at public colleges (chosen from inside the system) was of interest suggesting a potential pool of female college presidents.

In 1991 the pool continues to increase slightly at both types of institutions but hiring from within the system is the preferred route. Since private colleges are appointing women from within the system at the associate and assistant levels of vice-president, dean, and director, as well as the 'All Other' category indicates they may be utilizing Miner and Estler's (1985) accrual mobility and internal flexibility models, alternatives to time-in-line.

Alternative career pathways

There is substantial evidence to support the contention that hiring committees review candidates dossiers in favor of credential rather than competence as indicated by Bartlett and Barnes (1978) and Williams and Piper (1988). This indicates that

successive levels of experience, supportive of a particular type of university mission, or employment in the appropriate university sector take precedence and support the time-in-line tradition. Public colleges and universities seem to be tightening their policy while private institutions are still willing to stay more flexible in their hiring trends. When persons for whom positions were rewritten in terms of accrual mobility leave to seek other positions, the indication seems to favor replacing that person through the credential over competence guidelines. So what was once flexible may no longer be. Potential training positions at the associate and assistant levels under the vice-president show an increase in the 1986 appointments and a decrease in 1991; private colleges are not reporting an increase. It may appear that private schools have more flexible hierarchies, are more receptive to female candidates and are consciously preparing them to step into the senior level administrative slots sooner than time-in-line would permit. Private schools seem more willing to consider competence and expertise over credential.

Positions in the `All Other' category are many and varied and transcend all three university hierarchies--academic, student affairs, and managerial. For some of the auxiliary positions, candidates are appointed from government, business, law firms, and various consulting positions to fill staff vacancies or newly created slots. Such positions provide increased opportunities for women to enter with previous experience and proceed through

the ranks by accrual mobility patterns. However, it is positioning with the academic hierarchy that connotes power and authority at the university. Women appointed in these academic slots are likely to be staff rather than line appointees. While they gain valuable experience, they still lack the time-in-line credential favored by search committees for certain types of successive positions. Sagaria (1988) notes that women moving between public and private institutions may find that competence and specialization differ. In other words, some appointments may be self-defeating if women approach a glass ceiling or find that their accrued administrative knowledge is less marketable at a college and university other than where they received their job experience.

Conclusion

Results of this five year longitudinal look at women in higher education administration indicate that progress has been made on behalf of women but the future is still uncertain. Breaking with time-in-line traditions in academic administration may be tenuous considering that upper levels of the hierarchy are dominated by males who are likely to have risen though the ranks in the traditional time-in-line manner. College and university search committees filter and identify candidates for positions who reflect their own values systems and credentials and tend to hire from within the same system, public to public or private to private university. So long as males dominate the administrative

hierarchy, it appears likely that time-in-line will continue to reign over accrual mobility and flexible structure models.

Colleges and universities typically do not have policy statements guiding their hiring practices beyond the approved affirmative action guidelines. In fact, more women currently occupying positions of power and authority could influence policy concerning the future entry of women into administration. To de-emphasize time-in-line traditions and promote alternative pathways, Moore (1984) advocates the design of policies and procedures that expand and enrich the candidate pool so as to identify systematically additional candidates. Kanter (1977) advocates the use of more `flexible organizational structures' that facilitate groupings or clusters of females in offices or positions within the hierarchy rather than their continued scattering and isolation.

Using the traditional time-in-line criteria and given the way females value systems are shaped by earlier socialization assures that women will still remain less competitive for administrative positions than their male colleagues. Search committees must be more diverse in their composition so as to search also for competence and job fitness rather than credential and affiliation exclusively. As was true in 1986 and continues through 1991, women have been more successful in the more flexible hierarchical structures of the private colleges and universities. Public institutions need to develop and institute alternative career paths for women and relax the rigid time-in-

line traditions or over the next five years find women concentrated more heavily in the private sectors of higher education.

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Table 1:

Summary of Demographics 1986 and 1991

	1986	%	1991	%
Sex				
Male	1190	74%	1009	68%
Female	420	26%	471	32%
Former Institution %				
Public	680	42%	667	45%
Private	648	40%	560	38%
Other	282	18%	247	17%
Hiring Institution				
Public	849	53%	726	49%
Private	761	47%	746	51%
System				
Within	1095	68%	1036	70%
Outside	515	32%	443	30%
	N = 1610		N = 1472	

Table 2

Comparison of All Positions for 1986 and 1991

	1986	%	1991	%
President	70	4%*	136	9%*
Vice-President	197	12%	255	17%
Assistant/ Associate Vice-President	49	3%	50	3%
Dean	328	20%	299	20%
Assistant/ Associate Dean	78	5%*	53	4%*
Director	451	28%	370	25%
Assistant/ Associate Director	92	6%*	18	1%
Chair	58	4%*	59	4%
All Other	287	18%*	232	16%*
TOTAL	1610	100%	1472	100%

Chi square significance $p < .05$

Table 3

Comparison of Female Administrative Appointments for 1986 and 1991

	1986	%	1991	%
President	13	3%	25	5%
Vice-President	39	9%	63	13%
Assistant/ Associate Vice-President	12	3%*	18	4%
Dean	82	20%	100	21%*
Assistant/ Associate Dean	21	5%	13	3%
Director	178	42%	156	33%
Assistant/ Associate Director	29	7%	14	3%
Chair	9	2%	6	1%
All Other	37	9%*	75	16%
TOTAL	1610	100%	1472	100%

Chi square significance $p < .05$